DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 141 742 CS 003 330

AUTHOR Haberman, Martin
TITLE The Development and Use of Reading Vaccine in Stamping out Education.
PUB DATE May 76
NOTE 37p.; Paper presented to the Western Nebraska Conference on Early Childhood, The Eastern Nebraska Conference on Early Childhood and the Central Nebraska Conference on Early Childhood, May 1976

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Content Reading; *Educational Needs; *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Problems; *Reading Instruction; Reading Programs; *Reading Skills; Standardized Tests

ABSTRACT

This paper argues against the expenditure of large amounts of money and the allotment of large segments of classroom time for the formal teaching of reading. While students at all levels should receive up to one-half hour per day of formal reading instruction, more concentrated study does not produce commensurate gains in learning and may, in fact, lead to diminished learning and even to antipathy for the subject. Furthermore, devoting a great deal of time to reading instruction reduces the time spent on other essential learning. The paper examines arguments proffered by those in the reading movement for emphasizing the teaching of reading and suggests that the arguments are based on the false beliefs that reading is prerequisite, at all levels, to all other forms of learning; that reading is a discrete, rather than continuous, skill; that there is a certain "magic" minimum level of reading that all people must achieve; and that the assessment of all students should be standardized. The author proposes that the time spent in enlarging formal reading instruction be devoted to stimulating interest in all the other curriculum areas and in teaching reading as an adjunct to other pursuits rather than for its own sake. (GW)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED141742

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The Development and Use Of Reading Vaccine In Stamping Out Education

Martin Haberman, Dean
Division of Urban Outreach
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee/University of Wisconsin-Extension

A Paper Presented to the Western Nebraska Conference on Early Childhood, The Eastern Nebraska Conference on Early Childhood and the Central Nebraska Conference on Early Childhood

May, 1976

CS 003 330

Introduction

Much to their chagrin, I addressed the Milwaukee Area Reading Council in Fall, 1975, on the topic, "The Right to Protection From the Right to Read." Essentially, this speech contended that formal reading instruction is being overemphasized. Subsequently, the April, 1976, issue of Today's Education, a publication of the NEA, carried an abbreviated version of the speech under the title, "The Reading Movement Has Gone Too Far." As a result of that article, I received numerous letters, papers, and telephone calls from teachers, researchers, and others supporting my position; a few even suggested initiating an organization to lobby against the reading movement. I received no negative feedback.

Another result of the article was an invitation to pursue the ideas in greater depth with selected early childhood educators throughout the State of Nebraska in May, 1976. I believe this issue is sufficiently important to make this effort and I accepted. The paper which follows is an elaboration of my position.

Is more instruction always a benefit? Is it possible to over-emphasize instruction even in an area that is recognized as fundamental? Can useful instruction be transformed into a negative influence by offering too much of it? Are there declining economic returns for expending too many resources in one area? Are there reduced learning gains to be derived from devoting ever increasing amounts of time to a subject?

Recently, I worked with a group of parents and teachers in a middle school which had instituted some curriculum innovations. They were concerned about a decrease of several months in the math achievement of the school's graduates. One bit of information provided to them was from the Superintendent; he estimated the cost of the extra personnel to provide the extra math help to raise the scores to be "X" dollars. A second piece of information was provided by the Curriculum Director who pointed out the number of hours per week of extra math instruction that would need to be offered and asked the parents which subjects they would like to drop in order to offer more formal math instruction. Third, a math consultant

provided the parents with the information that an average difference between 8.5 and 9.0 achievement scores was essentially meaningless; not only as a difference, but because standardized math tests don't assess basic mathematical understandings. The importance of this meeting is that it started out as a simplistic effort to raise a district's math scores. Who can be against such a worthwhile goal? However, when the parents and teachers learned the meaning of the scores and what they had to give up and expend to raise the scores, they decided they had more important educational issues to worry about.

This was an exceptional experience. It occurred in a neighborhood of well-educated people. Also, the superintendent was about to retire and could risk attacking the god of standardized math achievement. If this were a larger district, or a less well-educated one, or a more heterogeneous one, or a minority one, or one that represents the majority of our people, the decision would have been otherwise.

There are three principles of curriculum development involved in this anecdote. The first relates to goals and is a matter of curriculum

takeover by the testing mechanism. Standardized tests are usually sold as being only one measure of student progress; however, once they are initiated, they quickly become the primary means of assessment and finally, the criterion that teachers teach to and thereby the curriculum goals themselves. I refer to this as:

The Standardized Test Subversion Principle of Curriculum Development

> Whenever standardized tests are introduced, they eventually become both the primary measure of learning in a content area and the goals of the instruction in that area; there is no way to counteract this takeover of assessment and subversion of goals.

The second principle that the math anecdote deals with relates to cost benefit.

The Diminishing Returns Principle of Curriculum Development

> Every content area can be overtaught to the point that expending more resources does not produce commensurate gains in learning; indeed, beyond certain points, there is a diminished learning and even an antipathy generated by such overemphasis.

My third principle deals with the "something's gotta go" idea that, while simple, is rarely considered.

The Finite Principle
Of Curriculum Development

> School curricula have a given number of hours. Decisions to emphasize and expand study in one content area must include immediate decisions about which areas to deemphasize by offering less instructional time.

The application of these principles can help us to understand the growth of the Reading Movement.* There is not only a lack of concern, but

---

*The Reading Movement is a confederation of federal, state and local agencies who, together with private interest groups, profit financially and with increased status and power from the expansion of formal reading instruction. One recent example is the National Institute of Education, which was widely criticized for its efforts in developing a "comprehensive research program on teaching." The NIE has squashed criticism by making its first research institute The Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University. The first annual award is for 3.5 million dollars and will focus on the teaching of reading at the elementary level. This same month, the USOE has also announced a new national reading program for adults which will receive 17 million dollars in 1976. These are just a few minor examples. My attempt is to demonstrate the power of the Reading Movement and not summarize the actual dollars being controlled. A review of the dollars would involve a study by itself, covering federal and state legislation, foundations, local school budgets, private agencies. A modest estimate is that it would run into the hundreds of millions.

actual support, for permitting standardized tests to take over the goals of formal reading instruction. Second, the Reading Movement has no qualms about increasing the time students spend in formal reading instruction; more time and money is always assumed to be better. Third, the Reading Movement never raised the question of what is to be bumped out of the curriculum in order to add more formal reading instruction; since it is assumed that nothing of value can be learned except by reading about it, then all other subjects can be held in abeyance indefinitely with no feeling that students are being deprived. There are countless examples of the results of such a policy, but one will suffice. In my city, we have many low-income and minority high school youths who are being involved in planning the desegregation of the schools. These youngsters frequently protest desegregation and boldly proclaim that they don't know what the 14th Amendment is and don't give a damn. The Reading Movement provides the school people with an ideal alibi: "You can't teach anyone anything important until they can read at a certain level." As an aside, it's interesting to note that reading people cannot state what this minimum level must be.

I would like to pause at this point and confess to a few strongly-held personal commitments. It is essential that all children and youth learn to read as well as they can. It is vitally important that we prepare people who are highly literate and who will read voraciously. It is imperative that we motivate people to love to read. Accepting these three basic beliefs, however, does not automatically lead me to the misconception that they can be achieved by forcing formal reading instruction into the kindergarten and nursery. Neither can they be achieved by adding more personnel who are reading experts, reading supervisors, reading coordinators, reading consultants, and reading resource people. Neither can they be achieved by increasing the money spent on standardized reading tests and reading books and reading workbooks and foolproof reading systems. Neither can they be achieved by throwing out the general/liberal curriculum and substituting only formal reading instruction. Neither can they be achieved by forgetting the goals of public education and transforming the whole enterprise into a remedial reading center.

There is no reason why all students at all levels should not receive from a few minutes up to 1/2 hour per day of formal reading instruction.

The age, development and individual predispositions of the student control the exact amount of time that is beneficial. Time spent in formal reading instruction should also vary from day to day. But beyond one-half hour of concentrated study in this skills area, the dangers I have alluded to become paramount.

It is also necessary to emphasize that I am naively hopeful that curricula and instruction would be rich and bursting with language-learning opportunities and that every activity would extend students' speaking, writing, reading, and listening. But let us be clear. The Reading Movement started and flourishes in exact opposition to the notion that language learning should be a natural and concommitant outgrowth of <u>other</u> essential learnings. The Reading Movement's raison d'etre is based on the need to control when all will begin to read, to control the minimum grade levels, to standardize the assessment of all, and to accomplish these controlled, predictable results by increasing amounts of formal reading instruction at the expense of anything else.

In order to support its goal of more personnel and money by cannibalizing the school curriculum, the Reading Movement has several shibboleths which it uses to rally the masses. It would be helpful to examine some of their more effective slogans.

First is their straightforward assertion "People can't function in modern society without reading." This pearl of wisdom assumes reading to be a discrete rather than a continuous phenomenon. We are supposed to believe--as a result of this brilliant analysis of the prerequisite for success in modern American society-- that the complex skills of reading are like a light switch, on or off; that some people can read and have the potential to function while others, the damned who cannot read, have only the choice of non-functioning. It's really quite simple to the reading people.

It takes no great imagination to see why the reading people don't want us to see the skills of reading as continuous. We might raise the question of how well people must read and they cannot answer. Since we all read overdue bills, love letters, newspapers, novels, scientific journals, and

instructions on fuse boxes at different levels, the concept of minimum reading level is a hoax. Reading people simply do not know and, therefore, cannot say how well people must read to function in American Society. And because the reading people are frightened witless by the fear that we will discover that they are a technology without a science, a research field without a theoretical underpinning and a set of procedures with neither a philosophic or ethical rationale, they try to divert our attention from their ignorances. Their motto, "People can't function in modern society without reading," is not a positive statement, but a desperate attempt to prevent us from recognizing that reading refers to abilities in continuous development and not an either-or situation. The reading people would love to have us argue their nonsense issue of whether illiterates can survive in a technological society, rather than have to face our demand that they specify what they mean by minima for all, by minima in all conditions, and by minima for defining "functioning in American society."

The second shibboleth of the Reading Movement is a continuation of the first: "They need it to get jobs." Here "it" refers once again to

reading as a discrete, on or off function. "They" apparently refers to illiterates who cannot secure employment. This simplistic admonition neglects certain obvious economic truths. How many women (i.e. 1/2 our population) would get more, or better, jobs if they improved their reading skills? How many of those now employed (over 80 million) would secure more rewarding jobs, or higher salaries, if they raised their reading levels? How many of the unemployed need higher reading levels to regain employment?

The schools consider one year of reading achievement to be significant. What change in job status would occur if we caused a two-year achievement rise in the scores of dentists, firemen, hairdressers, or reading teachers? Would they be given raises? Would they be promoted? Would they become happier in their work?

Do you believe that people in the same occupation earn different amounts because they read on different levels, or do you believe salary to be a function of seniority, the location of one's practice, other conditions of work? Do you believe that higher reading achievement leads to occupations which pay more, or which lead to greater satisfaction? Do you believe that

the difference between more success and less success is one's reading achievement? If so, try comparing librarians with bank presidents, legal researchers with judges, college professors with restauranteurs.

Once again, the propaganda of the reading movement, "They need it to get jobs," assumes a discrete ability, or a comparison, between the lowest five per cent and the highest five per cent. For the ninety per cent of us in the middle, the causes of our job happiness and/or success has many more powerful and direct influences than our reading levels. Jenck's studies indicate quite clearly that school learning and later success are not connected by any clear relationship.*

Having countered their gross distortions, the Reading People now come down to their real concerns, which are not aimed at society in general, but at minorities and the success that one will achieve in school, not in life, by being a reader.

Their third argument flatly states "They need it to fill out job applications." Now we are down to it! This contention which unfortunately carries great weight among low income and minorities would be rejected by

*Jencks, Christopher, Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America, (New York: Basic Books, 1972)

middle class and more educated groups. Would you be willing to spend $2,000 per year per child for 12-14 years for the guarantee that he/she will be able to fill out a job application? I have a feeling you would expect more.

I interpret "They need it to fill out applications for jobs" to be a discriminatory attitude. "Our" children need the full curriculum to be ready for life, college and self actualization. "They" (i.e. the potential welfare people and criminals) need none of these frills. "We" need to be protected from "them" since they will drain our tax monies in institutions and on the dole. The best way "we" can protect ourselves from "them" is to make certain that, if they learn nothing else (and we can deliver on that), "they" learn to fill out a job application and stay off "our" backs.

Once again, as in the preceding myths, reading is conceived of as a discrete skill. The saddest part of this assertion about job applications is that it is an incredible lowering of expectations and hope regarding human potential. And, the cruel nature of the socialization process produces

many minority and low-income people who will accept these lower horizons for their children. They talk about and accept a notion of the "survival curriculum" composed of filling out job applications, knowing how to dress for an interview, office and eating manners, and tactics of living in a high crime area in lieu of the arts and humanities, social and physical science, and a total liberating educational experience. Under the guise of sincere help, we have created a two-caste curricula. "They" should have their children prepared to fill the factories and offices,"we"should have our children prepared in the broadest possible way. And this is how we do it. By making it appear that reading is prerequisite, at all levels, to all forms of other learning, "they" are never reading well enough to receive other than more formal reading instruction.

This brings us to their fourth contention: "They need it to learn other things." Once again, the statement is intended to convey the misconception that reading is a discrete skill which, when developed to that never-specified-but-magic level, permits the initiation of other learning.

This fourth shibboleth of the Reading Movement, "They need it for learning other things," is a convenient refuge for incompetent teachers who do not know how to motivate and engage their students in learning. What better rationalization for not being effective than to lay the blame on previous teachers and the students' lack of readiness? But if teaching the sciences, the arts, and the social sciences to children and youth is accomplished primarily through vicarious "reading about" rather than "active participation in," then educating teachers with educational psychology, philosophy and curriculum has been a sham--a set of irrelevant hurdles offered by Schools of Education to be discarded in later practice. "Later practice" here refers to the assignment of pages in graded texts. In simple terms, The Reading Movement helps teachers, parents and the students themselves to make assigning pages synonymous with teaching and reading pages synonymous with learning. If you really believe in such synonyms, be honest enough to say so publicly. You cannot on the one hand say you believe that teaching and learning is more than reading specific texts and simultaneously be sympathetic to teachers who claim they cannot teach because the students have insufficient reading levels.

It saddens me to report that in the numerous states, cities, suburbs and rural areas where I have worked with teachers they still become upset when I challenge their assumption that reading texts at a particular grade level is the primary means, or even an appropriate means, of instruction. My sadness derives from the endless complaints which teachers, who return to the university, make about those professors who require only one text and who base their lectures and exams on that text. In effect, "When it's done to us, it's bad teaching, but, if we can't perpetrate this methodology on others, then the students are impossible to teach."

Once again, as in the previous slogans of the Reading Movement, reading is meant to be misread as a discrete set of on or off skills; that is, "If you can't read graded texts, you can't learn the contents." Actually, the problem they are trying to fudge over is their assumption that one must read on a fifth grade level to learn fifth grade science, on a sixth grade level to learn sixth grade science, on a seventh grade level to learn seventh grade science. First of all, there are no such things as fifth, sixth, or seventh grade science. There are the various branches of the sciences which

have been arbitrarily hacked up by school people who label the stuff as this or that grade of science. The coup de grace is when school people purchase texts written on these various levels and thereby institutionalize the monumental hoax that the scientific disciplines are themselves conceptualized in graded steps to be taught a year at a time. As simple as this idea is, I am afraid I must report to you that large numbers of teachers (i.e., a substantial minority) truly believe that the realms of knowledge have been developed in graded steps, or that there is an inherent logic by which school people have parceled out knowledge into grades.

My friends, I hope you are not upset to the point that you do not consider the obvious. The grading of content is arbitrary. There is no such thing in mathematics as second-grade math. It is arbitrary. There is no such thing in science as third-grade physics. It is arbitrary. There is no such thing in sociology as sixth-grade community study. It is arbitrary. There is no such thing as sophomore chemistry. It is arbitrary. No matter how many of you do it, no matter how many of you believe it, no matter how

many of you force children and youth through this graded extrusion press, your decisions on what to teach at which grade are arbitrary.

Once you know that knowledge is not graded, the need to have a graded reading text match a particular reading level must also be questioned. Almost any piece of content should be taught and learned with reading materials written at a variety of levels and by other methods which involve more than reading.

Curriculum people try to justify what they do by claiming they are helping children move from easy to hard as they progress through school. But what they have made is a progression of the reading levels of the texts, not the material itself. While it is possible to have social studies texts that are written on first, second and third grade reading level, the material in those books cannot be graded. Learning about one's neighborhood need not precede learning about the world, space, or the distant state a child's grandparents live in.

Consider the last time you wanted to learn something, and I hope it is a recent or current experience. Do you pay attention to the sources

and availability of the material or to the reading level? Do you see how reading levels can be made an intrusion upon rather than a facilitator of learning?

The incompetent are pleased, therefore, to embrace the Reading Movement's slogan "Reading is the key" since it leads to one graded text for each course at each grade level. And one textbook, written at one grade level, supports the teacher who wants to work with the whole class, rather than subgroups or individuals; it supports the ignorant teacher who lacks the background and, therefore, the self confidence to skip material--the text in this teacher's hands becomes a bible; it supports the teacher seeking one absolute standard for failing students rather than holding themselves accountable.

The fifth shibboleth of the Reading Movement comes from the public and is not accepted by school people. This contention is that "Good teachers have students who score higher on standardized achievement tests." This is another way of saying, in essence, that good teachers have students who read better, since all standardized tests are, to some degree, reading

tests. Suddenly, those teachers who support the Reading Movement are disenchanted. Now that they will be evaluated by student scores--rather than judging the students or the genes the students' parents have passed along--the teachers begin to make humane arguments about how testing is unfair to some, philosophical arguments about what tests really can't measure, and statistical arguments about the errors in the tests themselves. Make no mistake. Teachers as a group still support the Reading Movement and the standardized tests which are dependent on the Reading Movement. It is only when the tests are applied to teachers that they object.

Think about it. If I.Q. tests assess ability (and not reading) and if children are placed in special classes on this basis, shouldn't teachers take I.Q. tests so that the low ability ones can be more appropriately placed or eliminated? How can the concept of I.Q. measurement (i.e. by actually assessing reading) be valid for students and not teachers? Similarly, if standardized achievement tests and college entrance examinations (which essentially measure reading and reading-related skills) are valid for students, why shouldn't teachers take them? If it is valid to judge and assign students by such

tests, why not teachers? I find it refreshing to find teachers who believe in the reading movement and in the standardized testing movement which supports it, and who will honestly and in a forthright manner state their beliefs. I find it somewhat hypocritical for others to take the position that it's valid to test the students on reading and reading-related abilities and then call it I.Q., or readiness, or achievement, or potential, and all the while protest that such tests are invalid for teachers.

Grey's Oral Reading Test has words such as detritus, redoubts, empyrean, promontories, pristine and spurious. These have been standardized as 12th grade level. Teachers I have worked with generally do not know these words. When I ask them if this lack of knowledge is important, they don't seem to think so. Why is it unimportant for teachers to know certain words but of critical importance for children and youth to not only know specific words but within specific time periods in particular grades? Why is it unfair or unprofessional or irrelevant to use standardized tests on teachers but reasonable to use these assessment measures with children?

Permit me a comment about language development. I believe we should help our fallen brethren in the Reading Movement to expand their reading goals to all forms of communication. It strikes me as ludicrous to have large numbers of people offering formal reading instruction to individuals who do not or cannot speak. I see young children, as well as older students, who neither know or practice the concept that language is the primary mode of human interaction. It is not simply that children do not have the vocabulary; they do not always have the psychological disposition for sharing ideas and feelings with other people through the language medium. Wouldn't it be wise for schools to have sharing lessons and for teachers to teach children to speak with each other? And wouldn't it be even wiser to have teachers of young children teaching them to want to share ideas and feelings with each other? An honest, interesting"show and tell," for example, has much greater validity for young children than any formal reading lesson. Instead, we have a juggernaut of thousands of reading fanatics who have instituted a system of trying to force all people to read before they have even developed the

predispositions to use language for human interactions, or the skills of speaking, or the background of vocabulary concepts. Thank heavens the schools have not taken on the goal of preparing people for happy marriage. There would be skills lessons in lovemaking standardized by grade level. And if any person was still sensible enough to question what we were teaching to four-year olds, we would respond "They will need those skills in later life," or "They come from backgrounds where we cannot be sure they would get this," or 'Some youngsters can already do these things and we don't want to hold them back."

We often hear it contended that, because of television, people do not read as much, or as well, as in former times. I would argue a different position: because of the distasteful nature of greatly-increased amounts of formal reading instruction at the expense of teaching people to see value and pleasure in literature, students are driven to television as a form of relaxation and escape.

Individuals who are turned off by my attack on The Reading Movement often say "Can you suggest anything positive?" It seems to me,

however, that removing a spreading cancer is a very positive action. Confining formal reading instruction to one-half hour per day and to no more than 10 per cent of a school's budget--that includes both material and personnel--is a very positive step. Second, this time limitation will tend to improve the effectiveness of learning these skills, which is what reading is, and cut down on the reading casualties frequently created by overly long practice-drill-training sessions that extend for several hours per day and stretch over years. Third, this limitation on formal reading instruction will permit a resurrection of study in the various sciences, arts, social studies, music, consumer affairs, economics, literature, writing, dance, philosophy, computer science, engineering, health studies, ecology, cartography, psychology, space -medicine, architecture, crafts, in short, in exposure to the full range of human knowledge comprising the genuine, liberal education which the schools are supposed to deliver. Fourth, the placing of a proper perspective on reading as one form of achievement rather than the form of achievement will undermine the standardized testing movement. This is both an extremely positive and an achievable suggestion.

Finally, I would propose we emphasize communcation and human relations skills with some of the time and resources gained by deemphasizing formal reading instruction. Personally, I don't regard compulsory public education's primary purpose to be to prepare students for jobs. Assuming, however, that you perceive the preparation for jobs as most critical, I would like to share the results of a recent study which I believe to be quite typical of results that would be obtained from a summary of employment studies.

In February, 1976, the Indiana Commission on Higher Education conducted a manpower study. Following are some of their results. College grades were ranked ninth in importance by employers who stressed previous work experience, human relations and communication skills as areas they examined carefully. Employers also believe general education to be much more important than training in a specialized area--even specializations in business or technical areas. If this is the case for college graduates, imagine how much more important it is for secondary graduates. Yet, we continue to stress vocational education as a panacea for the non-college bound. The study also revealed that in companies of 50-99 employees, they do not hire college graduates and would continue this policy.

When asked for suggestions concerning ways that colleges and universities can improve the manner in which they prepare students to meet the needs of employers, the interviewees offered a wide variety of responses. Many of these suggestions were actual problem-solving techniques, such as the establishment of cooperative programs, while others were the identification of a problem without a specific suggestion for solution, such as the need for students to be made more work-oriented. It should also be noted that a sizable number of respondents expressed the view that higher education was doing a good job of preparing students for employment.

Many respondents were of the opinion that students are not getting adequate work experience and that they do not have sufficient understanding of business and industry.

Suggestion	Frequency Mentioned
Increase support for cooperative programs, work-study programs, and internship programs	59
Encourage students to get work experience or practical experience	26
Provide students with a better understanding of business and industry	13
Make students more work-oriented	8
Expose students to the business-industry environment	5

There appeared to be a commonly-held view that many students complete academic programs, even in such fields as engineering and business, without having had adequate exposure to the world of work. They noted that students acquired little understanding of the nature of business-industry and were not work-oriented, and the respondents believed that actual work experience would help alleviate this problem. In this regard, the support for programs such as cooperative programs, work-study programs, and internship type programs was overwhelming. Fifty-nine respondents specifically mentioned programs of this nature as being of great value, and an additional 26 respondents suggested that students be encouraged to get practical work experience.

Many respondents felt that communication between higher education and business-industry is inadequate.

I find it fascinating that, in this study and in the others I have read, there is no mention of reading level. The "Alice-in-Wonderland" fantasies of reading people are never even considered. Employers do not discuss reading as a discrete ability that an applicant can or cannot do;

neither do they discuss changing 7th to 9th grade levels as a basis for hiring or promotion. The reading-equals-job fantasy can only survive when we strip it down to individuals who are illiterate, but the reading movement never admits that that is the limit of their concern when they try to propagandize about the supposed direct relationship between reading level and jobs.

I cannot summarize the preceding: if I could I would have been considerate enough to offer the summary at the outset. It is important for me to have gone through this with you because I want you to see how I have been led to some beliefs which, while tentative in the sense that I am open to modifying them, are held with sufficient strength to guide my actions and my recommendations to you for your implementation.

Intelligence is the capacity to acquire and apply knowledge; it is not the ability to read at a certain level divided by one's age. Intellectual activity is the process of engaging in rational rather than emotional processes as one makes choices, decisions, or reaches conclusions; it is not remembering paragraphs one has read as quickly as possible. Learning is a process of changing one's actions in response to new ideas

and feelings; it is not a process of reading pages and answering some questions. Scholars are people who specialize in some branch of the humanities --not people who get A's in schools. Scientists are people who can use particular methodologies for answering questions in specific disciplines; they do not merely read about what others have done. Similarly, artists are performers, critics, and expert consumers; they are not limited to reading first and creating later.

The truth,as I know it, is that reading on somebody's notion of grade level is never the <u>prerequisite</u> for learning. The truth, as I know it, is that reading <u>results</u> from becoming interested in the various forms and realms of knowledge. The very worst effect I see from the Reading Movement is this precise confusion. People (even students in schools) are motivated to read more and better in order to pursue some need or interest. Reading is the natural outgrowth of a heightened interest in anything. The time spent in enlarging formal reading instruction should be devoted to stimulating interest in all the other curriculum areas and teaching reading as a hand-maiden to other pursuits rather than for its own sake.

At this point, too few school people see reading to be the result of an effective curriculum rather than its cause. We must protect the range of knowledge to be included in the school program. If we can emphasize the role of instruction as primarily interest-grabbing and only secondarily as mastery, we can lay the groundwork for reemphasizing broad curricula which stimulate reading and not be turned around into reading first and learning second.

There are several effects I would like this argument to have on different people. I will try to anticipate some of these reactions.

If you are a reading teacher and cannot teach or work in other areas, I would expect you to reject my arguments. This is particularly true if you have been an active member of the Reading Movement and have devoted a great portion of the only life you have to advocating increasing amounts of formal reading instruction. It is the rare person (and usually a well-educated one who permits broad reading to permeate and influence his thinking), who will say "I've thought about what you've said and realize

that my life's work may have been misdirected. I will now not only quit what I've been doing but I will begin advocating less formal reading instruction." I realize the naivete of such an expectation and, therefore, do not direct my contentions to the active members of the Reading Movement.

To those of you who are teachers who have been cooperating with the movement, but who do not stand to lose your positions by changing your viewpoints, I would urge you to think about placing a ceiling on the amount of formal reading instruction you will conduct in your schools. This will be more difficult for those of you who have decided to save your energy by coasting and make believe you can teach by assigning pages. Changing your views will be somewhat easier for those of you who still have the commitment to work as hard as possible. Motivating students to become interested, constantly finding activities for students to become engaged in, challenging, stimulating, arousing, stirring up, bringing to life, and grabbing their interest requires one thousand times the commitment, intelligence, and energy than teaching the difference between "p1" and "b1;" it also requires a lot more planning time. The only result I can predict from all of this effort is that more

students will develop reasons for reading and love of reading than from the direct approach of forced amount of standardized lessons.

If you are an early childhood teacher, I need to learn more about the reasons for your agreement with my position. If you agree with me because you don't like standardized tests or because you don't like to teach formal reading lessons to youngsters who are not yet ready, I accept your support, but as low-level. Obviously, forcing irrelevant lessons or time-consuming, invalid tests on young children is foolish and harmful; but you don't need me to tell you something you have always known. On the other hand, if you are an early childhood educator with a very full agenda of concepts, principles, laws (not necessarily or simply information) that you want to have youngsters develop and you reject the intrusion of formal reading lessons on an already full program, we are starting to resonate on the same frequency. And, if you define your job as emphasizing the need and uses of language, before you engage in the charade of formal lesson-giving to children who still may not know why people talk to each other, we're resonating more strongly.

And if you believe you have a responsibility to teach people to love to read and gain this love by having reading serve useful and pleasant functions in their lives, we're resonating still stronger. And if you recognize that the selection of what to teach is always arbitrary, but you know enough about physical sciences, social sciences, and the arts to make choices about the specific concept to be taught, to be delayed, or to be omitted, we're communicating very clearly and I welcome your reasoned agreement and correction of my views. I do not seek the endorsement of those who will not teach reading but then substitute a curriculum of following directions.

If you are a school administrator, I would expect you to begin helping to educate parents and teachers about what criteria to use in evaluating schools and to start expecting a full curriculum. This role will become increasingly difficult as your parents and teachers are from lower backgrounds.

If you are a board member, it will mean resisting governmental bribes. There will be increasing monies which will pressure you to sell out a full curriculum for more formal reading.

If you are a teacher educator, it will mean selecting students who know a great deal and then preparing them to be teachers rather than be skills-trainers. It will also mean that universities have to stop pandering after reading "research" via external monies. The financial pressures on Schools of Education is making them more vulnerable to hiring reading faculty when they should be emphasizing the other disciplines in teacher education. There should be an immediate cessation of doctoral degrees in reading. There are already many times the number of experts necessary for dispensing the very limited amount of knowledge available in this area.

Since you cannot immediately respond to this material, I will try to share with you some of the reactions of those who are too threatened with my contentions to consider them and who mishear me for their own purposes.

--Why are you against people learning to read?

--How can you say that reading won't help people learn more in school?

--Don't you believe that people need to read to get into college?

--How can we help the low income and minorities if we don't teach them to read?

--What about the exceptional and retarded child? Shouldn't they get as much formal training as possible?

--Why not get the colleges to drop their entrance exams before you pressure us?

If these are the kinds of questions I have generated, permit me to apologize for not having communicated clearly.